

NEW YORK STATE COMMISSION OF CORRECTION

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In the Matter of the Death :  
:   
of Irene Bamenga, an inmate at :  
the Albany CJ :  
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FINAL REPORT OF THE  
NEW YORK STATE COMMISSION  
OF CORRECTION

TO: Sheriff Craig Apple  
Albany County Sheriff's Office  
Court House  
Albany, NY 12207

## GREETINGS:

WHEREAS, the Medical Review Board has reported to the NYS Commission of Correction pursuant to Correction Law, section 47(1)(d), regarding the death of Irene Bamenga who died on July 27, 2011 while an inmate in the custody of the Albany County Sheriff at the Albany County Jail, the Commission has determined that the following final report be issued.

FINDINGS:

1. Irene Bamenga was a 29 year old female who died on 7/27/11 from Cardiomyopathy and Congestive Heart Failure while in the custody of the Albany County Sheriff at the Albany County Jail. Bamenga was a Federal detainee of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) who had an extensive medical history and was awaiting deportation.
2. Irene Bamenga had a history of hypertension, congestive heart failure, and anemia. Bamenga also had a partial lobectomy of the right lung due to a fungal infection she had developed in 2006. Bamenga reported taking the following medications daily: ASA, Spironalactone, Lasix, Digoxin, Carvedilol, and Lisinopril. Bamenga had no known mental health history.
3. Irene Bamenga was a citizen of France and a native of Angola, Africa. Bamenga reportedly lived in Lynn, MA with her husband. Bamenga had been living in the United States illegally since 2005 after her temporary visa had expired.
4. On 7/15/11, Bamenga was attempting to enter Canada in Lewiston, NY (Niagara County) in an effort to try and return to France. Bamenga's expired visa was discovered and she was taken into custody by the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).
5. Bamenga was transported to the Allegany County Jail to be held pending deportation to France. Bamenga was admitted to the Allegany County Jail on 7/15/11 at 10:50 p.m.
6. Bamenga was seen by RN D.H. on 7/16/11 who assessed her vital signs, medications, and TB status. Bamenga gave her history of hypertension, congestive heart failure, and previous positive TB history. Bamenga had in her possession two large week-long pill boxes filled with pills. However, she had no prescription bottles labeled with her name, prescriber,

medication name, or dosage. Bamenga stated her medications were aspirin, Spironalactone, Lisinopril, Furosemide, Digoxin, and Carvedilol, but did not know the dosages. Facility NP C.R. was away on vacation and did not see Bamenga until 7/18/11. As Bamenga was assessed as stable by RN D.H., a bridge order for her medications was not called into the doctor.

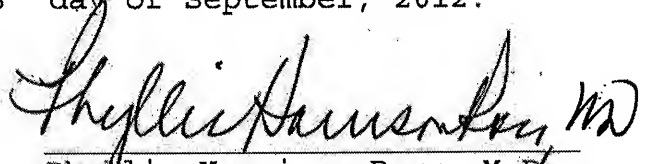
7. NP C.R. assessed Bamenga on 7/18/11 and ordered her medications. Since Bamenga could not recall her dosages, NP C.R. ordered the standard adult dosages for each: ASA 81 mg, Spironalactone 25 mg bid, Lasix 20 mg, Digoxin 0.25 mg, Carvedilol 20 mg, and Lisinopril 20 mg. Bamenga was also ordered to get a chest x-ray.
8. Bamenga was transferred by ICE to the Albany County Jail on 7/21/11 to await further processing for deportation. Bamenga was transferred with all of her medications and health transfer information. Bamenga was seen by the nurse at intake and had a phone order placed to the doctor to continue her medications. Bamenga was continued on ASA 81 mg, Spironalactone 25 mg bid, Lasix 20 mg, Digoxin 0.25 mg, Carvedilol 20 mg, and Lisinopril 20 mg.
9. It was documented in the medication administration record that Bamenga received her medications from 7/21 to 7/26/11. On 7/22, 7/24, 7/25, and 7/26, RN D.V. documented "NS" or no show for Bamenga's 9:00 p.m. dose of Spironalactone. Per the policy of Correctional Medical Care, Inc. (CMC, Inc.), Albany County Jail's contracted medical provider, when medications have been refused or not shown for 3 times, an encounter with the patient must take place. CMC, Inc.'s medical administration at the Albany County Jail has addressed this policy issue with all medical staff. The evening medication nurse, D.V., is no longer employed at the Albany County Jail.
10. On 7/25/11, Bamenga filled out a medical request slip that stated she was not receiving the full dosages of two of her medications, Spironalactone and Coreg. Bamenga stated she was to be receiving them twice daily. The sick call slip was dated as received on 7/25/11 and triaged by nurse R.L. for nursing sick call. Bamenga was seen by NP A.P. on 7/26/11. NP A.P. conducted an assessment of Bamenga. Bamenga's physical exam was unremarkable noting clear lung sounds and no edema in her extremities. NP A.P. increased Bamenga's Coreg to 25 mg bid.

11. A second medical request slip was filled out by Bamenga dated 7/25/11. This one stated that Bamenga was having shortness of breath and palpitations at night especially when lying down. She also complained of dizziness upon standing. It was noted that this slip was not documented as received by staff or triaged by the facility nurse.
12. Bamenga was housed in the female dormitory on 6W. Officer T.A. was assigned the unit supervision for the 11:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. tour. At approximately 12:15 a.m. on 7/27/11, inmates notified Officer T.A. that inmate Bamenga was possibly sick and needed medical attention. Officer T.A. called for an officer to relieve him so he could escort Bamenga to medical.
13. Officer T.A. went to Bamenga's area to investigate. Bamenga would not respond and Officer T.A. notified his supervisor at 12:19 a.m. At 12:23 a.m., Officer T.A. entered the L3 area to try and wake Bamenga. Officer T.A. discovered Bamenga was not breathing and called for a medical emergency.
14. Medical staff, who were already en route, entered the unit at 12:24 a.m. CPR was begun by Officer T.A. and RN G. EMS was also called to respond to the scene.
15. Colonie EMS arrived at the scene at 12:35 a.m. Paramedics found CPR in progress by jail staff. Bamenga was warm to the touch with no signs of lividity. Paramedics began advanced life support measures and continued resuscitation measures en route to Albany Memorial Hospital. Colonie EMS transported Bamenga at 12:55 a.m.
16. During transport, at 1:08 a.m., paramedics got a ventricular fibrillation rhythm which was shocked but converted back to asystole. EMS arrived at the hospital at 1:09 a.m. Resuscitation measures were continued in the ER. Attending ER physician, Dr. E., assessed Bamenga who had now been in cardiac arrest for approximately 45 minutes with 35 minutes of asystole. Continued resuscitative measures were considered futile and she was pronounced dead at 1:15 a.m.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Recommend that this case be closed as a natural death.

WITNESS, HONORABLE PHYLLIS HARRISON-ROSS, M.D., Commissioner, NYS Commission of Correction, 80 Wolf Road, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, in the City of Albany, New York 12205 this 18<sup>th</sup> day of September, 2012.

  
Phyllis Harrison-Ross, M.D.  
Commissioner

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